

Bloat - How To Prevent The Second Biggest Killer In Dogs Today.

I'm about to tell you about something that could literally save your dog's life.

I'm not being dramatic here – it's true.

What I'm going to tell you about is said to be the second biggest killer in dogs today (the first is cancer) and something that many dog owners know nothing or very little about it.

This condition is called 'Gastric Dilatation-Volvulus' (GDV) and is commonly referred to as Bloat.

Bloat occurs when there's an unusual amount of air (swallowed air), fluid and/or food in a dog's stomach. This causes the stomach to enlarge and swell and sometimes rotate and twist. This in turn puts pressure on the surrounding organs and can quickly lead to low blood pressure, shock and damage to the internal organs.

Bloat can lead to death in a matter of hours and even with immediate veterinary treatment, approximately 25% to 40% of dogs die from this medical emergency.

I know it's a bit scary just thinking about this so here are some signals to look for:

- A swollen or enlarged abdomen.
- Retching without anything coming up.
- Trying to belch or vomit but not able to do so.
- A quickened heart beat.
- A lowered body temperature.
- Weakness and shortage of breath.
- Extreme salivation.
- Pale gums.
- Collapse.

What should you do if you think your dog is suffering from Bloat?

Get them to a vet immediately – time is a major factor here.

The best way to avoid Bloat from happening in the first place is to know what causes it.

So let's look at some possible causes...

Stress – This could be situations such as:

- A house move.
- Dog shows.
- Mating.
- A new dog in the home etc.

Food and Eating Habits – this includes:

- Raised food bowls.
- Rapid gulping of food or fast eating.
- Eating dry food which contains citric acid as a preservative.
- Eating dry food which contains fat among the first four ingredients.
- Inadequate amounts of pancreatic enzymes, such as Trypsin (which is found in meat).
- A dilution of gastric juices, which is required for proper digestion, by drinking too much water before or after eating.
- Eating gas-producing foods (soybeans is one of the culprits here).
- Drinking too much water too quickly (can cause the dog to gulp down air).

Exercise – this includes:

- Taking your dog out for a walk or playing with them before eating and particularly after eating. Leave at least 1 hour ideally before and importantly after feeding time before taking them out.

Heredity.

- Having a close relative who has suffered from Bloat can increase a dog's risk in getting this condition.

Dogs that are underweight are also considered to have a higher risk of suffering from Bloat as well as dogs that have a nervous or fearful disposition or have history of aggression with dogs and/or people.

My advice is to be aware of the potential symptoms and to study, investigate and make the necessary changes to any areas that are applicable to you in the possible causes section.

Nothing is better than prevention. Particularly when dealing with something that could prove fatal in a matter of hours.